



Progress and Activity Report - Georgia Safe Routes to School: Task Orders 9 and 10 Spring 2013

This Progress Report reflects activities ending April 30th under Task Orders 9 and 10. Through this billing period, the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource (SRTS) Center project team continued to provide services and outreach for schools and community stakeholders throughout the state. The Resource Center has a network of 431 schools signed on to the Georgia Safe Routes to School Partnership Program. Staff made four presentations and supported six events statewide. One new Friend signed on in April.

School Outreach Coordinator Highlights

During this activity period, the GA SRTS Resource Center promoted the second annual National Bike to School Day. School Partners were encouraged to register their events for the May 8th event. Additionally, during April, SOC's encouraged contacts to nominate school partners for the Outstanding Partner of the Year for the 2012-2013 school year. Partners of the Year will be announced in early May. SOC's continued to encourage Partners to pursue SRTS strategies that would promote the school from Bronze to Silver and, ultimately, Gold status within the partnership program.

South GA Regional Commission, Friend of the Resource Center

SOC Nykia met with the South GA Regional Commission to further develop opportunities in Nicholls and Lowndes counties. The regional commission identified Nicholls Elementary School as a strong candidate for Safe Routes Programs. Currently fewer than 20 students walk to school. However safety improvements and education programs may increase capacity for walking and biking significantly. Lowndes Elementary School was targeted as a potential SRTS school by Nykia in previous years, and a recent change in administration and partnership with the Lowndes County Transportation department has resulted in increased interest in safety education resources and activities. The regional commission has committed to assisting these schools with planning resources for future grant applications. Nykia will work with each school to establish partnership, develop goals, and initiate implementation of programs.

Ashford Park Elementary School, Dekalb County (Potential Partner)

Ashford Park Elementary School parents have become aware of great SRTS programs at nearby Dekalb County schools and contacted Nykia to discuss bringing the program to their school. Nykia met with two parents, currently involved in school wellness initiatives, to discuss opportunities for integrating SRTS programs into classroom and after school activities. Once partnered, Nykia will assist with development of a "morning mile" program, as well as facilitation of a walkability assessment. The school will host a walk and roll event for Bike-to-School Day in May to kick-off their SRTS program. Nykia provided planning assistance for this event and anticipates immediate partnership.

Georgia Safe Kids Coalition, Friend of the Resource Center

Nykia, Patti, and Alicia have worked closely with individual Safe Kids Coalitions across the state to provide increased bicycle and pedestrian safety outreach. The statewide Safe Kids Coalition has recognized the superior bicycle and pedestrian safety resources provided by the resource center and contacted Nykia to discuss increased opportunities for partnership statewide. Safe Kids Georgia has expressed interest in SRTS Pedestrian Safety Education Trainings for

each Safe Kids Coalition and increased partnership at the district and school level. Outreach staff will continue to build these opportunities to extend expertise and further expand the reach of SRTS across the state.

Georgia SHAPE, New Friend of the Resource Center

Alicia met with Dan Fesperman, Project Manager of the Georgia SHAPE Program, to discuss the relationship between the SRTS Resource Center and SHAPE. Georgia SHAPE works to bring state agencies together with the mission of fighting childhood obesity and serves as a resource for Georgia communities. The program will be mirroring the Blue Zone Project and starting a healthy community pilot program in LaGrange in the near future and wants the Resource Center to be a part of this effort. They also are planning a continuing education program on grant writing and will invite Resource Center contacts to participate. Mr. Fesperman asked to feature the Resource Center on their website with a write-up about our services and also tips for using active transportation. Georgia SHAPE became a Friend of the Resource Center.

Willie Weir Presentations:

Calhoun Primary School (Partner-level, Calhoun City), Elm Street Elementary (Silver-level, Rome City)

Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia, the bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee for the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, hired Willie Weir as a speaker for SRTS Partner Schools for the fourth consecutive year. Mr. Weir is a cyclist, speaker, columnist for Adventure Cyclist magazine, and correspondent for the NPR radio station in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Weir visited three schools in Northwest Georgia and did his presentation titled “The Bicycle: The World’s Greatest SUV.” During an hour-long presentation, Mr. Weir regaled students with stories from his bicycle travels through Hungary, India, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. He also reinforced bicycle safety by telling students to “be smart, be safe, and be seen” when riding their bikes. Outreach coordinated with schools to schedule the presentations. All presentations were successful and well-received by students, teachers, and staff.

Barrow Elementary (Gold-level, Clarke County) - Bike Rodeo

In cooperation with Safe Kids Athens, Barrow Elementary held a Bike Rodeo on Sunday, April 14th with approximately 100 students attending. The event featured bike helmet fitting, bike inspections and a skills course. Barrow Elementary is currently in a temporary location while the school is being remodeled, but will have around 20 regular bicyclers when they are back in their permanent building, so this was a great way to encourage and remind students to bike to school next year.

Cabrini Catholic School (Silver-level Partner, Chatham County)

St. Frances Cabrini Catholic School is small, private school in Savannah with students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Few children live within walking and bicycling distance. However, two dedicated parents have been championing the Safe Routes effort at the school for two years with bicycle and pedestrian education, a large Walk to School Day event, and a student-led walk audit. This year, one of those parents, Cristina Gibson, (who also chairs the Healthy Savannah Steering Committee) started a small bicycle train with her own child and a few others from her neighborhood. The group of three or four students rides over two miles to the school once a week. Currently, they chain their bicycles to a basketball goal at the school. Efforts are underway to find a more appropriate bicycle rack and to encourage more student participation. Ms. Gibson explained the need for signage and safety improvements along the route, and Patti has communicated those concerns to the City of Savannah and will continue to follow up with city officials and the Champion about the matter.

SRTS Marketing (Toole Design Group and Outreach Staff)

Website, Hotline, and Social Media:

The website was updated during April with National Bike to School Day information. Additionally, the Outstanding Partner of the Year information was added along with a nomination form.

The Hotline did not receive any calls this period.

The Resource Center's Facebook Page encourages users to visit the program's website and other relevant SRTS webpages and information sources. The Resource Center staff made seven posts to Facebook during April that included information about National Bike to School Day, Partner of the Year nominations, a webinar about school siting, and the Georgia SHAPE Program. The Facebook Page has 54 "likes."

Looking Ahead

May is Bike Month. Outreach will continue to encourage schools to register and hold bicycle events. National Bike to School Day is May 8th. At the end of April, Georgia had 23 events registered for National Bike to School Day throughout the state. Incentives and materials will be distributed to those events, and SOC's will provide planning support. In May, the Resource Center staff will announce winners for the 2012-2013 Outstanding Partners of the Year. SOC's will also distribute and collect Partner Progress Reports from partners to gauge participation this past school year. Information will be collected and used to plan for future Resource Center efforts. General outreach, presentations, partner development will continue throughout May. The Outreach staff will meet in Atlanta for a quarterly team meeting on May 14th. Staff will plan for closing out the school year. **The current Resource Center contract ends May 31st.** In anticipation of a new contract, URS has advertised two new School Outreach Coordinator positions. Interviews will take place in mid-May.